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THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
OF

St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral

Hackensack, New Jersey



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Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that (s)he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if (s)he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

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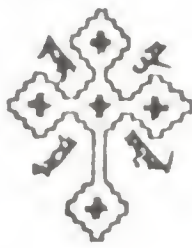
THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
OF

St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral

Hackensack, New Jersey







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St. Mark's Syriac Orthodox Cathedral

Hackensack, New Jersey

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FIRST EDITION : OCTOBER 10, 1964  
REVISED : MARCH 30, 1980

*PART I*

*THE CONSTITUTION OF THIS CHURCH*

## *NAME OF CHURCH*

### ARTICLE I

The name and style of this organization shall be St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral of Hackensack, and it shall be a New Jersey ecclesiastical corporation having a seal.

## *ALLEGIANCE OF CHURCH*

### ARTICLE II

This is an affiliated member church of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and is under the supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction of His Holiness the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East and his representative in North America, His Eminence the Archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch in the United States and Canada, and all other heads of the Archdiocese who will succeed him. It shall be governed spiritually in accordance with the rules and canons of the Hudoyo, the official law book of the Mother church, and by the canonical regulations established by the successive meetings of the Holy Synod. Such spiritual jurisdiction and authority cannot be changed, altered, modified or revoked.

### ARTICLE III

The Archdiocese of the Syrian Church of Antioch in the United States and Canada, Inc. shall be known as the legal owner of the Church and the Church properties, be they movable or immovable.



## *DISSOLUTION*

### *ARTICLE IV*

Section 1: This Church and its members shall not have the power to dissolve itself so long as the Holy See of Antioch exists.

Section 2: In the event that no person or persons of the Syrian Orthodox Faith are left in the United States and Canada, a bonafide representative of the Holy See of Antioch shall have the full power to administer the Church and all its properties.

Section 3: Neither this Church nor its property shall be alienated or encumbered without the written approval of the Spiritual Head of the Archdiocese.

Section 4: The Head of the Archdiocese shall have financial supervision of the Church and general supervision over all properties of the Church with full right of management and administration.

## *GOVERNING BODY OF THE CHURCH*

### *ARTICLE V*

Section 1: This Church, under the direct supervision and administration of the Archbishop, shall have a priest whose selection and installation shall be constituted by the Bylaws of this Church and appointed by the Spiritual Head of the Archdiocese.

Section 2: This Church shall have a Board of Trustees which shall consist of from seven to eleven members of the Church, of at least twenty-five years of age, who shall



be either appointed by the Archbishop or elected as Trustees, subject to the approval of the Head of the Archdiocese in as much as the Cathedral is the official parish of the Archbishop. The main duty of the Board shall be the administration, under the Archbishop's direction, of financial affairs, maintenance and social activities.

Section 3: The Trustees shall elect from among their members a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer by ballot.

*GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF TRUSTEES*

ARTICLE VI

Section 1: Members of this Church who are eighteen years of age or older and who have duly paid their annual pledge are eligible to vote.

Section 2: Each voter shall indicate his choice of Trustees by placing an "X" after the name of not more than eleven candidates, and the ballots shall be deposited in a box provided and sealed by the Board of Trustees. Immediately after the Church Service, the ballots shall be counted, and immediately upon determination, the names of the Trustees elected shall be announced.

Section 3: The election shall be held in January. In the event the election of the Board fails to occur, the Head of the Archdiocese shall appoint the members of the Board.

## OATH OF THE TRUSTEES

### ARTICLE VII

Between the time of election or appointment and the first meeting of the Board of Trustees thereafter, all the Trustees who have been elected or appointed shall take the following oath to be administered by the Archbishop after the Sunday Service:

*I \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby swear before God Almighty that I will not deviate from the Apostolic and Orthodox beliefs and doctrines handed down to me from the first three Ecumenical Councils, and that I will serve my Church and people with whole heart, sincerity and unswerving fidelity, and that further, I will obey unquestionably the orders of our Supreme Ecclesiastical Head and his representative in this country. I will perform the functions of my office according to this Constitution and Bylaws and with undivided devotion, motivated solely by the highest consideration of that service that will abound to the welfare of my Church and its adherents.*

## NEW MEMBERS

### ARTICLE VIII

Only baptized and confirmed persons who conform to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Syrian Orthodox Church may be admitted to membership in this Church. The priest shall present such applicant's name to the Spiritual Head of the Church and upon approval, the applicant shall be admitted into the membership of this Parish.

## *USING THE CHURCH HALL*

### ARTICLE IX

Section 1: No sermons, talks or discussions, other than those in conformity with our Faith and Church, shall be permitted on the Church premises, be it in the Church Hall or on the grounds.

Section 2: Organizations using the Church Hall for meetings and gatherings shall at no time be permitted to conduct affairs that would be detrimental or dishonorable to the name of the Church.

Section 3: With the exception of Sunday School classes, no one shall be permitted the use of the Church Hall during Church Services.

## *MISCELLANEOUS*

### ARTICLE X

The priest, Board of Trustees and any other organization affiliated with this Church who wish to publish anything related to the doctrine, history, rites, laws and traditions of our Syrian Orthodox Church should have the approval of the Head of the Archdiocese.

### ARTICLE XI

This Church shall pay an annual fee to the Head of the Archdiocese to meet the expenses incurred in maintaining the Archdiocesan residence and offices.

# AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

## ARTICLE XII

The Constitution may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the Church in good standing, and such proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall, at its first regular meeting, consider the same and shall take action thereon within three months. If by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Trustees present approve the amendment, it shall then be submitted to the Church membership at a general parish meeting. If it be then accepted by three-fourths of the members in good standing, it shall be in effect, subject to the approval of the Head of the Archdiocese.

*This Constitution was regularly adopted by the members of the Church.*

*On the 10th Day of October, 1964.*

*Revised on the 30th Day of March, 1980.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Ghammas". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

President of the Board of Trustees

Revised on the 30th Day of March, 1980.

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## Athanasius Yeshue Samuel , Primate



*PART II*  
*BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH*



## *DUTIES OF THE PRIEST*

### ARTICLE I

The priest, in the performance of the following duties, is responsible directly to his Spiritual Superior, namely, the Archbishop:

- A. He shall keep regular office hours in the parish house in order to be available to the parishioners.
- B. He shall conduct necessary services and celebrate the prescribed liturgies and other services in strict accordance with the rules and regulations of our Holy Church.
- C. He shall endeavor to encourage attendance at the Church Services and shall see that every member is registered in the records of the Church.
- D. He shall form a Sunday School in which our Faith is taught by qualified teachers, selecting the religious material to be used.
- E. He shall, as often as he is able to do so, visit the homes of the members of the Church, particularly at Christmas and Easter time.
- F. He shall visit the sick members of the Church as soon as possible.
- G. He shall perform all of the rites of the Church, and shall issue baptismal and marriage certificates as soon after the performance of same as is feasible, obtaining a written permission from his Spiritual Superior prior to the performance of a wedding ceremony.



- H. He shall keep and preserve an official Church record of all births, baptisms, marriages and funerals.
- I. He shall make, with the Board of Trustees, a special collection annually for His Holiness our Patriarch.
- J. He must take an active part and cooperate with the Board of Trustees in carrying out the various activities designed for the spiritual, social, educational and financial progress of the Parish.

## *DUTIES OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES*

### ARTICLE II

The duties of the Board of Trustees shall be as follows:

Section 1: To perform all duties required of them by the Constitution or Bylaws of the Organization and to perform such other duties as are generally performed by Trustees under similar circumstances, among the said duties being the following:

- A. To be the Board of Trustees of this Church, and to perform all the duties thereof.
- B. To secure the services of a properly qualified priest for the Church and to see that he is properly and adequately remunerated for his services. If the Head of the Archdiocese finds the nominee eligible for the office, he shall approve the nomination and appoint him as pastor.

- C. To collect all money due to the Church and to pay all the bills of the Church.
- D. To hold at least one meeting monthly at such time and place as is convenient to them, said meeting to be fixed by the Bylaws or to be at the call of the President or the Secretary of the Board of Trustees; also, to hold such other meeting as are required by the Constitution or Bylaws of the Church or as shall be desirable or necessary.
- E. To make a complete annual accounting of the income and expense of the Church for each year. Said accounting shall be posted on the bulletin board of the Church and sent to the members of the Parish not later than the 15th of January of the succeeding year.
- F. To determine the fees to be charged for all of the Church Services. The current list of such fees shall be available to all members of the Church upon request and posted in the Church Hall.
- G. All donations or gifts, of any sort, shall be made through the Board of Trustees, and no person shall make any purchase for or on behalf of the Church or any repairs to the Church and its property without permission of the Board of Trustees.
- H. To set up committees, one for the youth and another for the women, from the members of the Church and to have the full control, financially and socially, of all of their activities.

- I. To have the full authority to dismiss any member of the committees affiliated with the Church in case of misconduct, after consulting with the other members of the committee concerned, for the general good of the Parish.
- J. Two members of the Board of Trustees to be assigned as advisers to the committees affiliated with the Church.
- K. The Board of Trustees may request a report or financial aid from any organization affiliated with the Church when needed.

Section 2: Any member of the Board who defaults in paying his annual pledge to this Church or who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Board shall be relieved of his post as a Trustee unless he proves that failure to attend or to pay his pledge was due to forcible circumstances. However, upon the vote of two-thirds of the Board, any Trustee may be relieved of his office.

Section 3: A vacancy in the Board of Trustees, however caused, shall be filled at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees by election by the members of the Board, subject to the approval of the Head of the Archdiocese.

## *DUTIES OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH*

### *ARTICLE III*

Section 1: It shall be the duty of all members of the Church to attend, whenever feasible, all services of the Church and to see that their family name is properly inscribed on the Church register.

Section 2: Each family shall make an annual pledge to the Church in accordance with the financial resources of the family. If the Board of Trustees finds it feasible to establish a fixed annual fee to be paid to the Church by the working members of each family, this fee shall be required.

Section 3: It being recognized that no Church can be successful without the best endeavors and support of its congregation, every member of the Parish is particularly urged and required to do everything in his or her power to promote the welfare of the Church; to secure members, therefore, and to see that the youth of the Church are brought up and instructed in the Parish Sunday School and that the children form the habit of regular Church attendance, taking active interest in the affairs of the Church.

Section 4: During all meetings and gatherings, members are strictly forbidden to act or speak as to bring dishonor to the name of the Church or the Board of Trustees. Anybody doing so must be ousted from the place, and in case such a member insists upon defying the order, the law shall then be called in.

Section 5: The following Church fees are to be accepted by the members of this Parish as minimal, payable in advance.

1 : Baptisms	\$ 50.00
2 : Weddings	\$ 100.00
Plus a \$ 10.00 Archdiocesan marriage fee.	
3 : Funerals	\$ 100.00



4 : Use of Church Kitchen & Hall following Memorial Service. ( Payable to the Ladies Auxiliary )	\$ 75.00
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5 : Hall Rental	\$ 150.00
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These fees are liable to change at any time by the Board of Trustees.

## *AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS*

### *ARTICLE IV*

These Bylaws may be amended at any time, and every member of the Church shall have the right to suggest, in writing to the Board of Trustees, proposed amendments and any Trustee shall have the right to propose amendments to these Bylaws, and after such amendments are proposed, they shall be taken into consideration by the Board of Trustees, and shall be voted on, and if two-thirds of the Trustees present and voting are in favor of the proposed amendment, it shall be adopted and shall become effective, subject to the approval of the Head of the Archdiocese.

*These Bylaws were regularly adopted by the members of the Church.*

*On the 10th Day of October, 1964.*

*Revised on the 30th Day of March, 1980.*

*George Ghammas*

President of the Board of Trustees

*These Bylaws were approved by His Eminence Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of the United States and Canada.*

*and Canada.*

*On the 10th Day of October, 1964.*

*Revised on the 30th Day of March, 1980.*

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Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, Primate



*PART III*

*BAYLAWS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES*



# ORDER OF BUSINESS

## ARTICLE I

### Section 1:

- A. Prayer
- B. Roll Call
- C. Reading of the Minutes
- D. Report of the Treasurer
- E. Report of the Priest
- F. Report about Building
- G. Report about Membership
- H. Report of Committees
- I. Report about the Sunday School
- J. Unfinished Business
- K. New Business
- L. Adjournment

Section 2: No business shall be taken up except in the order presented, unless on motion such irregularity be sanctioned by a majority of the Trustees present.

Section 3: When a Trustee is to make a motion or speak to the question, he shall rise and address the presiding officer. The Trustee must confine himself strictly to the merits of the question under consideration, and he shall not be interrupted unless by a call of order, nor shall a Trustee be allowed to speak twice on the same question until all who wish to speak have been heard.

Section 4: When two or more Trustees rise at the same time, the presiding officer shall decide who is to speak first.

Section 5: At all meetings, every Trustee present, including the officers, shall vote on every matter submitted to a vote. The majority rule shall prevail in all matters unless otherwise provided for.

Section 6: No irrelevant or purely personal matters shall be discussed at any meeting.

Section 7: No member shall leave a meeting without permission from the presiding officer.

Section 8: No motion shall be received or laid before the meeting of the Trustees unless moved by two members, nor opened for discussion until stated by the presiding officer. When the questions are laid before the Trustees, the priority of motions shall be as follows:

- A. Motion to adjourn (undebatable)
- B. Motion to lay on the table (undebatable)
- C. Motion to raise a tabled matter (undebatable)
- D. Motion to refer (debatable)
- E. Motion to amend (debatable)
- F. Ordinary motions

Section 9: The Board of Trustees shall hold its regular monthly meeting on the last Thursday evening of each month or shall determine at each monthly meeting the date of the next meeting to assure maximum attendance.

## *THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES*

### ARTICLE II

#### Section 1: The President

- A. He shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and maintain order.
- B. He shall devote his time to the welfare and the interest of the general work of the Church.
- C. He shall sign the minutes of the meetings when they have been approved by the Board.

- D. If the priest is present at the opening of the meeting, the priest shall lead in prayer, otherwise the President shall open the meeting with prayer.
- E. The President shall have the deciding vote on questions of equal division.

## Section 2: The Vice President

He shall take the place of the President in case of absence, resignation, or disability of the President, and shall assume all the duties of the President to the end of the term.

## Section 3: The Secretary

- A. He shall keep a complete record of the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Trustees and all general meetings of the congregation of the Church.
- B. He shall receive for and on behalf of the Church all money due to the Church, and he shall issue a proper receipt therefore, and, at least once in each week, he shall turn said money over to the Treasurer, taking the receipt of the Treasurer thereof.
- C. He shall receive all official communications directed to the Board of Trustees and any complaints, regarding any matter whatsoever, in connection with the Church or the operation thereof, shall be directed to the Secretary.
- D. He shall make a monthly report of all his doings to the Trustees.

- E. He shall be custodian of the seal of the Church unless otherwise ordered.
- F. He shall conduct all correspondence for the Church and act as the Secretary of the priest in official capacity.
- G. His accounts shall be audited and endorsed by the President and Treasurer at each monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- H. He shall send notices for meetings.

#### Section 4: The Treasurer

- A. He shall receive all money from the Secretary and deposit the same as soon as possible in a bank to be selected by the Board of Trustees in the name of the Church.
- B. All withdrawals from the bank shall be by check and every check shall be signed by at least two members of the Board of Trustees, it being preferred that the President and Treasurer sign all checks. Proper arrangements could be made by those officers with the bank selected.
- C. He shall have the books of deposit balanced at the end of each calendar month and shall keep an account of all money received and disbursed.
- D. He shall submit all his books and accounts to the Auditing Committee.



## Section 5: The Board of Trustees

- A. It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees to promote the best interests of the Church in every instance, and for that purpose, they shall arrange entertainments, picnics, and other social affairs for the members of the Church, both for the purpose of raising funds for the Church and for the purpose of securing closer cooperation and friendship among the members of the Parish. The Trustees shall, in every instance, exert themselves to the utmost to advance the best interests of the Church.
- B. The Trustees should be particularly anxious to assist the priest of the Parish in all of his duties, and they should appoint committees from among their members to accompany the priest in collecting Church dues and subscriptions and be of assistance to him in his pastoral duties.
- C. The Trustees should be examples for the other members of the Parish, particularly in the conduct of their meetings. They should be courteous and observe all parliamentary rules.
- D. The Board of Trustees may alter or amend the Bylaws of the Church by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Church, subject to the approval of the Head of the Archdiocese.

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

## ARTICLE III

Section 1: The Sunday School Committee shall be composed of the priest, a superintendent, and two of the Trustees appointed by the President. They shall supervise the Sunday School and find the best teachers available in the Parish.

Section 2: The teachers shall be at all times members in good standing of this Church. Their faith must be Orthodox and they must be obedient to the laws of the Holy See of Antioch and respectable in the congregation and community.

*These Bylaws were regularly adopted by the members of the Church.*

*On the 10th Day of October, 1964.*

*Revised on the 30th Day of March, 1980.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Ghammas". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name of the President of the Board of Trustees.

President of the Board of Trustees

*These Bylaws were approved by His Eminence  
Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel,  
Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of the United States  
and Canada.*

*On the 10th Day of October, 1964.*

*Revised on the 30th Day of March, 1980.*

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Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, Primate

